

Fitchburg State College's student newspaper

It's a magical time



Jonathan Pendragon is set to share the art of illusion in performance, during Family Weekend at Fitchburg State College.

Pendragons add enchantment to Family Weekend

By Tim McCarthy

Family Weekend at Fitchburg State College is going to be enchanted with a touch of magic, literally.

A show by illusionists the Pendragons will highlight the two-day extravaganza, which begins Sept. 28 with fireworks and a parade.

"This will be our first time performing at Fitchburg. We've performed in other theaters in Massachusetts, but we're looking forward to adding this theater to our repertoire," said Charlotte Pendragon, who shares the stage with her husband, Jonathan. Their show, "The Ghosts of Broadway," can be seen Sept. 29 at 8 p.m. in Weston Auditorium.

Going above and beyond merely pulling rabbits out of hats, the Pendragons have been performing for over 25 years for a variety of audiences, including heads of state. "What separates us from our peers is that Jon ... has become the grandmaster of magic, literally. He gets phone calls from magicians to help them with their

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Staff photo by Megan Benevides

A new program will give students more opportunity to help the environment by recycling.

Campus is going green

By Mike Prescott

Green is a popular hue around the Fitchburg State College campus. As one of the school colors, it is seen on sweatshirts, signs, and sports uniforms. And this fall, FSC is about to get even "greener."

As the national focus shifts toward environmentally friendly activities, so has the focus of the Fitchburg State College administration. Starting in October, a new campus-wide recycling initiative will begin, offering students and faculty numerous opportunities to recycle throughout their day.

"There is always an incentive to go green in a facility atmosphere," said Joe LoBuono, FSC assistant director of maintenance. "If you look at the budget, recycling more saves on the cost of trash removal on a campus this size."

According to LoBuono, the materials-management department anticipates a drop in trash removal costs of nearly 50 percent after just one year of full implementation of the recycling program.

"There will be haul-away costs associated with the [recycling] program, but the cut in trash removal costs should even out the cost of any program, as well as save us money in the long run," said LoBuono.

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At SGA, teamwork reigns

Student government holds together with bonds of friendship

By Megan Benevides

Teamwork seems to be the theme for the Student Government Association this year.

It's certainly true for the executive board - the newly elected student-body president and vice president have been close friends throughout all four years of college.

Senior Maria Villena has taken the reins as president, while Marissa Torres fills the position of vice president. Their close bond of friendship, they believe, will help them work together to create a team and make important



Staff photo

Seniors Maria Villena, left, and Marissa Torres work together to make a difference on campus, as leaders in the Student Government Association.

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Green looks good to FSC

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Currently, Fitchburg State College utilizes recycling primarily for "mixed fibers," or newspapers and magazines. This fall, recycling efforts are aimed to expand to paper, plastic, and cardboard, all across the campus. Though this sounds like an easy and logical transition, it will require some major upgrades to existing equipment.

"I am working right now with Casella Waste Systems Inc. to modify our compactor and get ready for the roll-out of the project," said LoBuono.

Campus food service provider Chartwell's is also working to expand their existing recycling program as part of the new initiative.

Elsewhere on campus, there will be small bins in offices and classrooms, larger bins in common areas, and roll-away barrels in the highest traffic locations. As the demand for recycling grows, more receptacles will be added, according to LoBuono.

As for recycling in the residence halls, student volunteers will expand existing programs to encourage recycling of all materials using the appropriate methods.

Students and faculty can expect to see signs posted around campus, emails in their inboxes, and other awareness campaigns soon.



Fitchburg State College students show their spirit by getting into recycling.

Staff photo by Megan Benevides

Teamwork keeps SGA going strong

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improvements needed to Fitchburg State. Beyond a tight friendship, Villena and Torres are both communication media majors. Villena feels that this will help her communicate well with the student body. "It is easier for me to talk to people about important issues. I'm not afraid to talk to students about what they are having problems with," Villena said.

Torres has a minor in business, which she feels will be useful as she works to keep the SGA running smoothly. She considers herself a very organized person, which should also serve SGA well. "I am always making lists," she says.

As president and vice president, Villena and Torres serve on the executive board – also known as e-board.

"It is the administrative part of the council," Villena explains. "On e-board we discuss what direction we think SGA should be going in, and make sure everyone else is on task."

"We are composed of a president, myself; a vice president, Marissa Torres; a treasurer, Scott Pryor; a secretary, Kristen Creamer; and the student trustee, Eric Mayhew. We also help guide the rest of council when they are lost as far as what to do with in their class."

Villena is also be in charge of running weekly meetings, which she said include reports from e-board members, classes, commuters' board, the hall representatives, and committees. "We have an open gallery for any student to sit in on the meetings," Villena says, "and we sometimes have guest speakers that can include anyone from the head of Chartwell's to the president of the college."

It takes both passion and time to be an SGA member. Beyond weekly e-board, class, and government meetings, there are events to plan, office hours, and committee meetings. Villena and Torres know they have an intense year ahead of them.

As president, Villena hopes to accomplish the goal of creating a greener campus. Already this year a recycling program has begun in several of the dorm buildings. Torres supports this goal, and also hopes to bring about greater collaboration among clubs and organizations.

Although there is a lot of work ahead for Villena and Torres, they believe it will all prove worthwhile in the end. "The most rewarding part about SGA is the fact that you know you are doing something for the students," Villena says. "In committee meetings you are sometimes the only student voice there. To know that you were part of something that is going to change students' lives here at Fitchburg is a great feeling."

Pendragons bring magic to campus

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shows," Charlotte Pendragon said in a recent telephone interview.

"The Ghosts of Broadway" centers on vignettes taken from popular Broadway productions such as "Chicago," "Phantom of the Opera," and "Hamlet," and enchants them with the magic and stagecraft that have made the Pendragons famous.

Among the illusions is the Pendragons' world-famous "Metamorphosis," in which a bound assistant is placed within a box and, in the blink of an eye, swaps places with the magician standing on the box above. The trick has long baffled audiences – and, according to Charlotte Pendragon, it also confounds many magicians.

"It's really a standard by which illusionists judge each other," she explained. "If you perfect the 'Metamorphosis,' it reflects your level as a magician."

"It's been an evolution in progress," she continued. "We're both gymnasts; we use some of our acrobatic skills to make it faster, shaving off two to three seconds to about a second. Over the years, we've developed faster techniques. The entire goal is to make a metamorphosis in the blink of an eye so I appear to change into Jon. It's a learning process."

Currently listed in the Guinness

Book of World Records for completing the illusion in just a quarter of a second, the Pendragons plan to complicate the trick further by performing a new variation called "Shadow Metamorphosis."

"Jon is locked in a trunk," Charlotte Pendragon began. "I stand on top with a cloth, yet you see me through the cloth as my shadow is reflected. As I'm dropping it down you see my shadow, but now Jon has taken my place."

As a whole, Charlotte Pendragon said, "Ghosts of Broadway" is "a cool show, not simply a kiddie show."

"It's a very fun and enjoyable evening and also a nice distraction from homework."

Opening for the Pendragons is comedic ventriloquist Lynn Trefzger.

While the Pendragons show may be the climax of Family Weekend 2007, many other activities have been planned to entertain audiences of all ages.

"This year, the students really and truly have complete control over the entire weekend," said Shane Franzen, associate director of student development. "It's the students' weekend and they really wanted to focus in on families. They wanted the parents and family members to come back and have this really cool weekend."

The festivities are set to open Sept.

28 at 7 p.m. with a Mardi Gras-themed parade complete with floats, bands, and antique cars. "We haven't had a parade here in about three years, so the students are really excited," Franzen said. "We're hoping to have some jazz and blues-style music during the parade," he added. After the procession, which starts on North Street in front of Weston Auditorium, students and their families will be treated to the annual fireworks spectacle out on Elliot Athletics Field at about 8 p.m., and conclude the night with an outdoor screening of "Shrek the Third" at 8:30 p.m.

The following day's events will begin at 10 a.m. with a women's soccer showdown between FSC and Worcester State College out on the Elliot Athletic Fields, pause for a Tailgate Lunch break provided by Chartwell's, and then resume with a 1:30 p.m. football game between FSC and Bridgewater State College. During the games, families will also be able to partake in the Fun Fair, an open-air bazaar.

The Family Weekend parade, fireworks, and movie screening are free. Tickets for the Pendragons' "Ghosts of Broadway" cost \$10 for FSC students; \$15 for faculty, staff, parents, and alumni; \$20 for the general public and for all tickets at the door. For more information, call (978) 665-3163.

Flu's coming: Give it your best shot

Health experts say immunization is the best defense

By Julie Miller

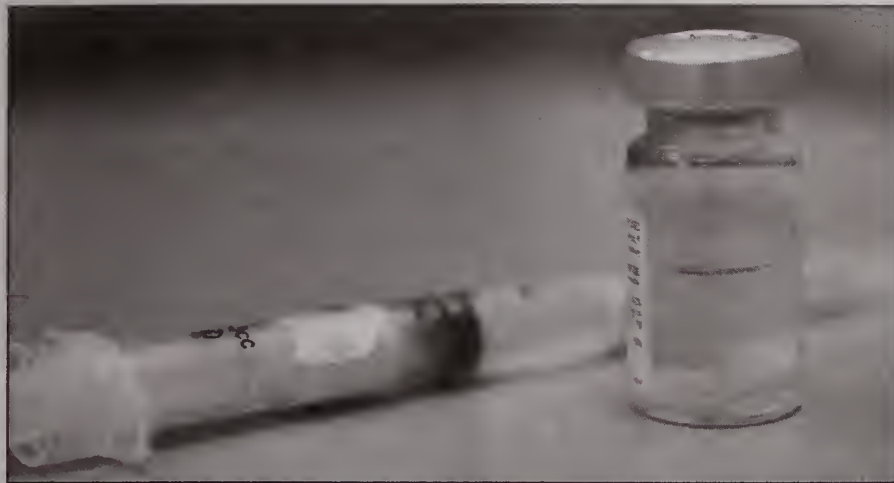
We've all had it: the itchy, runny nose; the dreadful, hacking cough; the teary, bloodshot eyes; and worst of all, the fever. We all try to avoid it, but we know it's coming for us sooner or later. There is no escaping it when you're trapped in a building occupied by 300 other infected people.

What is this awful plague that everyone so desperately tries to avoid?

It's the *influenza* virus, more commonly known as the flu. This very contagious disease is the most unwelcome guest on any college campus, because it attacks the respiratory system and leaves students feeling as though they have been hit by a truck.

"Having the flu makes you feel icky," says Amanda Roy, a junior at FSC. "It makes my nose all raw and I feel ugly, and no matter how many times I sniffle it doesn't get any better."

"I have to sleep sitting up because



I can't breathe through my nose, and my head feels like it's going to explode. All I want to do is sleep."

Andrew Finely, a sophomore, adds, "When I get the flu I can tell because I get muscle aches and headaches, pretty bad ones."

The symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, muscle pain, headache, and weakness. The average bout with the flu usually lasts only a few days, even though for the sufferers that seems like a lifetime.

Flu shots are often recommended, but not everyone is convinced.

Craig Shannon, a junior at FSC, said, "I don't think I'd bother getting

one. I don't see the necessity."

But Martha Favre, the director of FSC Student Health Services, urges students to get vaccinated.

"I would strongly suggest getting immunized. If students get the flu, they will miss a week of classes. The flu generally hits campus around exam time," Favre said.

The vaccination will be available on campus sometime in October to students, faculty and staff, she said, priced at \$10 for students and \$15 for faculty and staff.

"We have purchased 200 doses, and we get additional doses from the Board of Health in Fitchburg," Favre

said. Those planning to get immunized on campus are advised to pay attention to the video screens all around campus for updates on when the flu clinic will be open at FSC.

Wondering what you can do to protect yourself from catching this nasty bug?

According to the Massachusetts Department of Health's Public Fact Sheet, the best option is to get the influenza vaccination.

There are, however, other precautions to take. Make sure that a lack of sleep doesn't wear you down, and always wash your hands since the virus is spread through the air when the affected person sneezes, coughs or even talks. Sharing drinks and kissing are also common ways for flu to spread.

If, despite your best efforts, the flu still finds you, seek out medical care and resign yourself to bed rest to recover and regain your strength.

Should you have any further questions or health concerns regarding the influenza virus, you can contact Fitchburg State College's Health Services department either through their website, <http://www.fsc.edu/healthserv/>, or by phone at (978) 665-3216.

New grading system sets the record straight

Pluses and minuses add up to greater consistency

By Mike Prescott

As students began classes this semester, they were greeted with new professors, new courses, new challenges – and even a new grading system.

After months of open discussion, the grading structure at Fitchburg State College has been adjusted to quarter-grade intervals.

"The No. 1 concern [among students and teachers] was the inconsistency of the existing grading policy," said Paul Weizer, a social science professor and member of the Academic Quality Committee. "There were pluses, but no minuses, which resulted in grade ranges that were too big."

In previous semesters, a good student might have earned a grade of 4.0, 3.5, or 3.0, for example. Now, that student can receive a 4.0, 3.7, 3.5, 3.3, or 3.0.

It was in Spring 2007 that the Academic Quality Committee – consisting of three faculty members, two administrators, and two students – took the issue up and began serious discussion.

A Blackboard site was set up to gather student and faculty input on the



Staff photo by Megan Benevides

Whether the grade is good or bad, it's more likely to be accurate with the new system of quarter-grade intervals in place at Fitchburg State College.

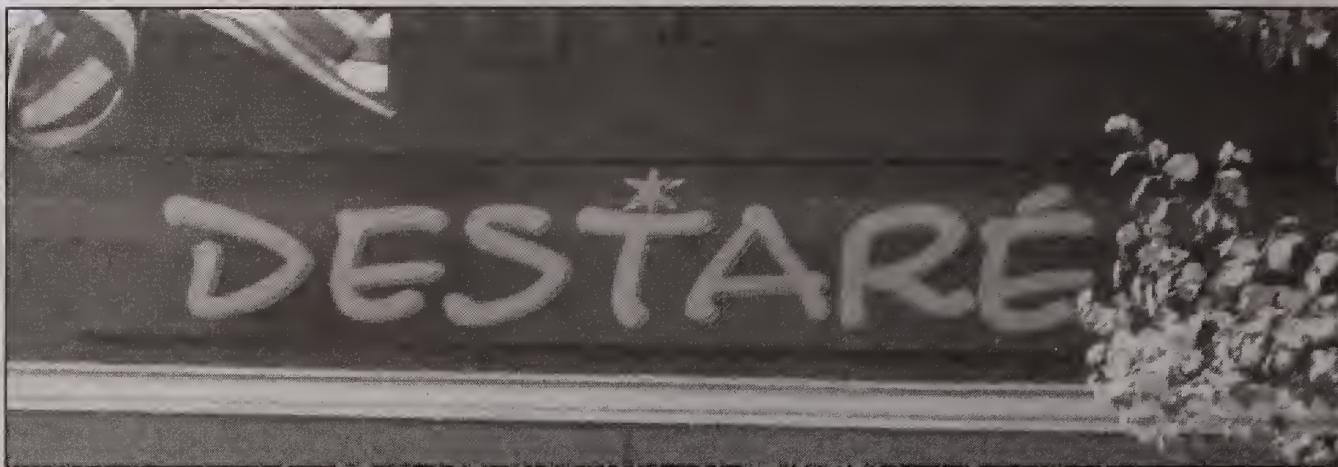
grading structure, and the response was loud and clear: It was time for a change.

The committee researched the grading options used at other state colleges, including Worcester State, as well as those used at private Central Massachusetts colleges such as Holy Cross in Worcester. They found that

the quarter-grade system was more prevalent among these colleges, and decided to move in that direction.

Throughout the process, student input was highly valued. The proposal to change the grading system was referred to the Student Affairs Committee, which reported back positively on the proposal.

Now that the new system is in place, Weizer said, students will receive grades more closely tailored to their individual effort and performance. "The hope is that it will more accurately reflect student performance, and address the concerns of students being placed in grade categories that they didn't deserve."



Elegance? Pour it on!

By Brittany Abraham

The word Destaré is elegantly illuminated on two sides of a very average-looking building on the corner of Fitchburg's busy Main Street.

The dim lighting shows through a peninsula of glass, leaving the inside activities a mystery to those passing by.

Inside, a sea of buzzing conversation and the musings of an energetic jazz band add life to this European-style martini bar and café. Antique furniture of varying texture and shape fills nearly half of this spacious establishment, while a modern marble bar extends lengthwise down the opposing side.

Indirect lighting by way of chic chandeliers and retro hanging lamps works to set a comfortable yet intimate mood.

It's a Tuesday night and an eclectic crowd, varying decades in age, has gathered in Fitchburg's newest hotspot.

Imagined and created by a partnership of three individuals - Chris Iosua, Lance Dellogono, and Paul Goguen - Destaré is the embodiment of their belief that Fitchburg is the place where

Nightspot brings upscale ambience to Fitchburg

an elegant establishment can and will be successful.

As described by Mr. Iosua, "This area has a huge percentage of community members that are unable to pursue a full, enjoyable evening in this area due to the lack of places to go, and we think Destaré can be the solution to that."

Thus far, without any advertising or marketing besides personal introductions and word-of-mouth, each night has been a pleasant surprise bringing in new, unique clientele, as well as reoccurring groups that have dubbed themselves "regulars."

Destaré, which is Italian for awakening, was influenced by cafés and bars encountered throughout the partners' travels - including Europe, South Africa, and Asia.

Melding atmospheric elements with drink and food recipes, this worldly bar works to bring an entire community together to enjoy the

nightlife. "We want everyone to feel comfortable here," Iosua explains. "We welcome everyone - businesspeople, FSC students, residents - to come in and enjoy themselves."

"This place is out of this world," Samantha Adelman, a 24-year-old local, says of Destaré.

"I wanted to check it out because everyone has been raving about it, and I have been back every Tuesday since."

The establishment offers live music, comedy shows, a list of 38 specialty martinis from bars all over the world, and decadent gourmet snacks and pastries.

On a typical night, groups of 50-somethings sip aged cognacs and chat about business on the couches directly bordering a group of 20-somethings enjoying trendy martinis and live music.

The staff, clad in all black and sporting enthusiastic smiles, mingles throughout the bar, serving attentively, chatting amicably, and seeming to have a good time.

If a pairing of comfort and elegance was Destaré's goal, its customers say it has, thus far, been a success.

Falcons set to soar past rocky start

By Brian Way

While most students at Fitchburg State were busy partying as if it were their jobs on the first weekend back at college, the students on the football team were working full force to begin the season with a victory.

The Fitchburg Falcons played their opening game of the season against the Curry Colonials on Sept. 8 at Elliot Field, and the fans came out to support them. The Civic Center parking lot was packed with cars, the stadium was full of proud parents, shirtless body-painted students, and rival Curry fans.

The weather was hot - about 90 degrees - and the Curry Colonials were hot, too. The Colonials won the game 47-20.

Although this was a disappointment for Falcon fans, the players didn't seem overly worried.

"It doesn't matter as far as I'm concerned," said Michael Portrais, No. 4 corner position. "We played our best and worked our hardest." According to linebacker Anthony Grassini, "They were a top-notch team and they just wore us down; they knew how to win."

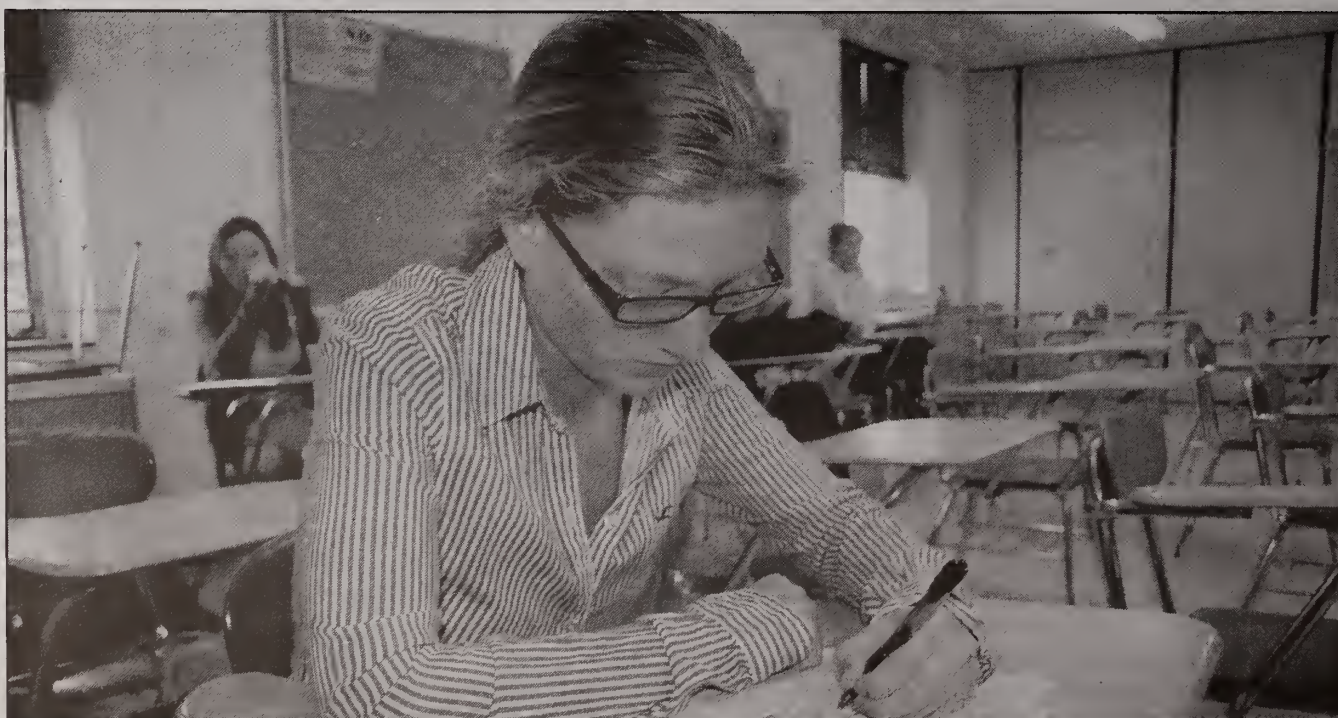
The game ended with a suspension due to heavy rain and severe lightning with 5:18 left on the clock.

There was hope in sight for our Falcons throughout most of the game. When Curry was up 16-0 after just a quarter of play, the Falcons jumped back with two touchdowns, landing the score at a close 16-14.

The halftime score was 23-14, Curry still ahead. The Falcons collected themselves in the clubhouse with chants that could be heard from the stands. "I think that we knew what we were in for when we saw them dominate Worcester, but we surprised ourselves at how good we were after halftime," Grassini said. "But they had good strategy and you can't get cocky."

The Colonials jumped ahead even further in the third quarter with a score of 30-14. However, the Falcons retaliated with another score, bumping them up another 6 points. The game was full of ups and downs, but the end was fatal for the Falcons when the Colonials pushed their score up, leaving it at 47-20.

While the first game of the season is always one to remember, there are plenty of games both home and away yet to come; Falcon fans will have plenty of chances to cheer for their team.



Staff photo by Nicoletta Amato

Want to make your study time more effective, and score higher on tests? Look for tips and strategies you can use, in Issue 3 of the Point on Oct. 12.